

School lunch menu changes are hot topic

By McClatchy-Tribune, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.30.14

Word Count **523**



A student selects an apple as he goes through the line during lunch at East Cary Middle School in Cary, North Carolina, on July 10, 2013. Photo: Chris Seward/Raleigh News & Observer/MCT

WASHINGTON - Lawmakers are arguing about school lunches. They cannot agree on how much money to spend on poor kids' food. They also cannot agree on what type of food should be in school lunches.

Charity Edwards' family is poor. Edwards is separated from her husband and has no job. She has four children. Her two girls are ages 6 and 11. She also has two boys, ages 15 and 17.

Poor children can get free or reduced-price school lunches, but only during the school year. They can't get the lunches while on summer break.

Lawmaker Patty Murray wants poor kids to get money for food during the summer, too. She said many poor children do not get regular meals at that time.

Let's All Eat Potatoes

Under Murray's plan, Charity Edwards would get \$600 to buy food for her children during the summer. That's \$150 for each child. Murray said her plan would help 30 million children.

Murray also wants poor kids to get to eat more white potatoes. White potatoes are a big crop in her state, Washington. But other lawmakers say children already eat enough starchy vegetables. They think they should eat healthier vegetables.

Lawmakers must soon decide on spending plans for the Department of Agriculture. That department is in charge of [school lunches \(https://www.newsela.com/?tag=school%20lunch\)](https://www.newsela.com/?tag=school%20lunch). But agreeing on what to do will be hard.

Toss In More Fruits And vegetables

Many lawmakers worry that the school lunch program already costs too much. And they fear it will soon cost even more.

Now, schools must offer more fruits and vegetables, whole-wheat products and low-sodium foods. That is because of new rules that are backed by first lady Michelle Obama.

Some people say it's a mistake to make schools offer food that many students do not want to eat. They say more food will be thrown out. They also say fewer students will eat the meals.

"Less kids are buying school lunches," said lawmaker Robert Aderholt of Alabama. He said it was time to "to hit the pause button" on new guidelines.

Aderholt and other lawmakers said schools that cannot afford to serve healthier school lunches should not have to. Meanwhile, the government said schools can serve regular pasta instead of whole-grain pasta for another two years.

Helping Children To Eat Should Be No-Brainer

School lunches are a controversial topic. In December, lawmaker Jack Kingston of Georgia suggested that schoolchildren could sweep the floors before getting free lunches. Many people loudly disagreed.

Patty Murray said she was ready for questions about the cost of her summer hunger program. But she is expecting support for it from other lawmakers.

Edwards, the mother of four, is hoping lawmakers will support the idea. The extra money would help her feed her children. She said everything is getting more expensive.

"My water bill is \$80 a month, my gas bill is \$200 a month, my electricity bill is \$45 a month," Edwards said.

She is also worried about the rising cost of meat. Last week, she paid more than \$20 for ground beef and bacon at the grocery store. Her food stamps do not cover the cost of meals, she said.

Quiz

- 1 Which of the following is NOT true based on the information from the article?
 - (A) Lawmakers can't decide what kind of school lunches to provide.
 - (B) Lawmakers can't decide how much money to spend on poor children's food.
 - (C) Poor kids can get free or reduced-price school lunches over the summer break.
 - (D) Poor kids can get free or reduced-price school lunches during the school year.

- 2 Which of the following sentences from the article supports the inference that many kids simply don't like healthy food?
 - (A) Last week, Charity paid more than \$20 for ground beef and bacon at the grocery store.
 - (B) "Less kids are buying school lunches," said lawmaker Robert Aderholt of Alabama.
 - (C) The government said schools can serve regular pasta instead of whole-grain pasta for another two years.
 - (D) Aderholt and other lawmakers said schools that can't afford to serve healthier school lunches should not have to.

- 3 Which of the following is NOT in the correct cause-and-effect relationship?
 - (A) New rules say schools must offer more healthy food, so schools serve more fruits and vegetables.
 - (B) Some kids get school lunches for free, so in Georgia they have to help by sweeping the floors.
 - (C) Poor kids don't get money for food in the summer, so lawmaker Patty Murray wants to give money to families during the summer.
 - (D) Fewer children are buying school meals, so lawmakers are saying schools that can't afford to serve healthier lunches shouldn't have to.

Read the following paragraph.

She is also worried about the rising cost of meat. Last week, she paid more than \$20 for ground beef and bacon at the grocery store. Her food stamps don't cover the cost of meals, she said.

Why did the author end the article with the paragraph above?

- (A) To remind the reader that while lawmakers are debating school lunches, what is for sure is that meat costs continue to rise.
- (B) To remind the reader that while lawmakers are debating school lunches, what is for sure is that poor families struggle to buy food.
- (C) To remind the reader that while lawmakers are debating school lunches, what is for sure is that kids will always prefer foods like bacon.
- (D) To remind the reader that while lawmakers are debating school lunches, what is for sure is that food stamps should be accepted at schools.

Answer Key

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